

powers continue to bind together in opposition to President Putin's soulless actions.

Adopting a new Strategic Concept and establishing a Center for Democratic Resilience will further display to Putin and those like him that the West will not back down to autocrats and dictators.

I therefore am proud to support H. Res 831, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

#### IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 4738 COVID-19 AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT ACT

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 6, 2022*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4738, the "COVID-19 American History Project Act."

This bill directs the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to establish the COVID-19 American History Project which will collect and make publicly available individual stories and records of experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States.

The bill includes a requirement to collect video and audio histories and testimonials of those who were affected by the pandemic.

Madam Speaker, the United States will soon reach a grave milestone. As of 9 o'clock this morning, there have been 974,277 American deaths from COVID-19. In the coming weeks, we will reach 1,000,000 deaths.

However, I believe that only focusing on that horrific number, though nonetheless important, makes us forget about who we lost.

Therefore, with this time I would like to tell the stories of my fellow Houstonians who sadly passed because of this unprecedented public health crisis.

The stories I will be recounting are all courtesy of Houston Public Media, of whose journalists I have been a strong supporter.

Knowing that his daughter would be unable to walk at her college graduation commencement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Carlos Araujo-Preza threw his daughter, Andreea Araujo, a belated graduation celebration with her close friends and family in late October. She said he really put in the effort to give her the best ceremony he could.

Dr. Araujo-Preza always went out of his way to make sure his daughter and her brother were taken care of, despite a busy work schedule at Tomball Regional Hospital. The siblings and their father spent their weekends together binge-watching movies and TV shows together.

But in 2020, Andrea Araujo was forced to spend her 23rd birthday without her father.

Araujo-Preza was two weeks away from receiving his first round of the COVID-19 vaccine before he passed away. He died Nov. 30, 2020, at the age of 51.

He knew at a young age he was meant to pursue a career in the medical field. Coming from a family of doctors himself, Araujo-Preza was viewed as a loving caregiver and someone his patients could always rely on.

Araujo-Preza was the leading doctor at his hospital who specialized in plasma research, while also distributing COVID-19 vaccines to nurses.

"His colleagues were fans of him," she said. "They loved when he came into work."

He would go out of his way to give his personal phone number to patients and would accommodate their needs at any time of day. Araujo said her father would wake up as early as 3 a.m. to go into work. Araujo-Preza would sleep in the hospital for days and sometimes weeks at a time to always be on call for his patients.

Now, Araujo said she tries to live by a saying her father used to share in Spanish: "The sun always rises the next day." Araujo-Preza would tell his children to not let daily challenges in life hold them back. Because, he said, as life goes on, you should too.

"I feel like people always say, 'with time, things get better', but I've noticed it's quite the opposite," she said. "Every day gets harder."

That story was courtesy of Emily Jaroszewski at Houston Public Media.

The next story is one that is especially close to my heart: Dick Cigler from the University of Houston.

Those who were mentored by Dick Cigler would tell you he left a lasting impression as one of the most influential staff members at the Daily Cougar—a highly regarded champion of free speech at the University of Houston's newspaper.

"He taught us about the importance of journalism," said Tanya Eiserer, an Emmy-award winning reporter for WFAA in Dallas and former Daily Cougar student editor. "He really taught us the importance of doing the right thing, doing it for the right reasons, and standing up for the underdog."

Nowhere was that more evident than when, in the 1990s, a group of UH journalists wrote a series of articles challenging the decreased university budget for UH downtown students and the increased budget for subsidiary campuses.

Dick allowed the students to voice their concerns brazenly.

"He didn't try to, you know, tell us to back down," Eiserer said. "He ran interference, and they knew that we were an independent news operation."

Eiserer remembers Cigler as being a listening ear and a guiding mentor when she transferred from Baylor University to UH. She regarded him as one of the people who helped her become the reporter she is today.

"I learned how to be a journalist at the Daily Cougar," said Eiserer. "I would not give that time back for all the money in the world."

Cigler worked as Director of UH's Student Publications department, now known as the Center for Student Media, for 23 years until his retirement in 2010.

His impact on the Daily Cougar can be felt to this day.

Cigler died on Jan. 24, 2021, at the age of 79. He leaves behind his two daughters Kerri Runge and Michelle Cigler.

That story was courtesy of Myraket Baker at Houston Public Media.

The last individual I want to mention is someone who is a local hero but should be a national one. That person was John Bland.

More than 60 years ago, a group of Texas Southern University students took seats at the lunch counter at Weingarten's Supermarket at 4110 Alameda Road, knowing they wouldn't be served.

It was Houston's first sit-in, and that spring, Black college students in cities across the country forced the beginning of an end to racial segregation—at lunch counters, department stores, and city halls.

One of the TSU students at the sit-in was John Bland, a 20-year-old who spent the rest of his life working to advance civil rights and equal opportunity.

Bland worked as a bus operator at HouTran, now called Metro, and he spent more than 50 years organizing with the Transport Workers Union. He served as a vice president of the Texas State AFL-CIO, a president of the Houston chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, a precinct judge, and a member of the Houston Police Department Citizen Review Committee.

"When workers would doubt their ability to beat the odds and make change, Mr. Bland would say, 'When we fought for integration in the 1960s, they arrested me 27 times, jailed me, and fined me, but that didn't stop us,'" Hany Khalil, Executive Director of the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation, said.

Bland died on July 9, 2020, at the age of 80. He leaves behind his wife, Betty Davis Bland, and their two daughters and grandson.

That story was courtesy of Jen Rice at Houston Public Media.

I wish I could mention every Houstonian and honor their lives because they all deserve it. They were mothers, wives, fathers, husbands, sons, daughters, and so much more. They will all be missed and are not just another number.

It is for that reason, Madam Speaker, that I strongly support H.R. 4738 and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

#### IN MEMORY AND PRAISE OF GREGORY ALAN BERRY A PERSON DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 6, 2022*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, as a senior member of this body and the Committee on the Judiciary, I want to offer praise and a message of appreciation for a beloved man, who served as a member of my personal staff in service of the constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas, located in the city of Houston.

He was a member of the baby boom generation that directly benefited from and was inspired by the work of President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon Banes Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and many other leaders that worked for equality and justice for all.

I am proud but heart-broken to later today participate in a tribute to his service in the U.S. House of Representatives, because Gregory Berry is an American original, my friend and valued member of my staff who died on March 15, 2022, at the age of 66 years old.

Gregory Alan Berry, long-time legislative counsel in the U.S. House of Representatives, died unexpectedly from hypertension on March 15, 2022, at his home in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Greg was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on February 16, 1956, the second son of Jesse Frank Berry and Bonnie Allena Berry. His father preceded him in death. He is survived by